

WorkFirst Reexamination Workgroup

Focus Area Briefing Paper

Issue: WorkFirst Staffing – DSHS and ESD

Goal: Enough income to not need TANF

Description: DSHS has the greatest number of WorkFirst staff. For State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2005, there were 1,072 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff working in DSHS associated with the \$85m expenditure for staffing (average cost per FTE = \$79,291). Funds for direct staff (and related costs) and the indirect overhead allocation represent approximately 12.4% of the annual Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) budget. The great majority of these staff are located in DSHS's community services offices (CSOs) and provide direct service to WorkFirst families. There are three primary categories of direct services staff and the approximate number of FTE in this category in SFY 2005:

- Financial Service Specialists (FSS) – determine and maintain eligibility for TANF – 396 FTE
- WorkFirst Program Specialists (WPS) – provide case management – 130 FTE
- Social Workers (SW) – serve special populations such as hard to engage, sanction, pregnant women, LEP, family violence, substance abuse, mental health and teen parents – 119 FTE

The other major categories of staffing include clerical and customer service specialists - 88 FTE, Regional and CSO administration and Regional and CSO support staff – 70 FTE, and call center staff – 104 FTE.

A small number of other regional and local staff are at least partially funded by TANF, such as CSO administrator (CSOA), deputy CSOA, clerical support and program managers. In addition to CSO staff, there are program staff in state office, primarily in the Division of Employment and Assistance Programs (DEAP), who are funded by TANF.

Staff resources that are allocated via the DSHS indirect cost plan (such as a portion of the DSHS budget office, communications, Secretary's office, etc.) are identified as part of the DSHS Overhead line item on the WorkFirst spending plan. (\$15 million/year)

The average caseload per case carrying worker is 110. Below is a history of FTE, salary and other staffing costs for DSHS from SFY 2001 to SFY 2004.

	FY 01	FY 02	FY 03	FY 04
FTE	1,115	1,223	1,168	1,148
Expenditure	73,364,000	84,287,000	81,879,000	86,317,000
Average cost per FTE	65,803	68,896	70,108	75,189
The expenditure line is made up of salary and benefit charges, building leases, supplies, travel, equipment, and computer systems.				

Employment Security Department (ESD) WorkFirst employment counselors (job title of WorkSource Specialists) provide job search activities that help WorkFirst parents find and keep jobs. There are approximately 200 FTE doing this function. Of the funding that goes to ESD for their activities that help WorkFirst parents find and keep jobs, approximately 10% of the total pays for their share of the agency's indirect cost plan.

In addition to the employment counselors who provide direct client services, a number of program staff are funded by TANF at ESD.

Cost / Savings:

Background:

Department of Social and Health Services: At the start of WorkFirst, the Financial Service Specialists determined and maintained financial eligibility and provided case management. Several years ago, the WorkFirst Program Specialist position was established. At that time, the case management and eligibility functions were to be split between the case manager and the financial worker. However, because of caseload/staffing and other issues this split did not occur in all areas.

Currently, CSOs deploy staff and assign WorkFirst duties in a variety of different ways based on office size, workload priorities, staffing levels, experience and expertise of individual staff and for other management reasons. Different models include:

- Complete split between case management and eligibility functions, case manager does only case management – very rare
- Split between functions, but case manager also takes on some eligibility duties either regularly or on a fairly regular basis

Employment Security Department: As a result of the Governor's decision to cut \$20 million out of WorkFirst job search services for this biennium, ESD has consolidated WorkFirst job search services into the WorkSource delivery system. As of July 1, 2005, ESD has reduced WorkFirst staffing (counselors and program staff) and has moved job search in all but a few locations from CSOs to WorkSource sites. (Note: approximately 104 FTEs were reduced from the WorkFirst ESD programs.)

Research results: There are various ways that DSHS staffing costs could be reduced. We hope to illustrate the various models used in CSOs for client intake and case management, and are awaiting information from DSHS on the various models in place in CSOs around the state. One could look to a "best practice" type of model to see if it would either save money or create better performance if it were implemented statewide. Another way that DSHS staffing costs could be reduced would be by streamlining the case flow and examining the role of the various individuals who work on a case.

Benefits:

DSHS reductions – To be explored

ESD reduction – As a result of the cuts, ESD has redesigned and refocused its services for TANF parents. The goals of the redesign are to:

- Create a more effective employment system for TANF parents
- Consolidate WorkFirst employment services into WorkSource to improve quality and access
- Increase the focus on meeting employer needs for qualified employees
- Begin to align local area planning for employment services with the current Workforce Development planning process